

THE MIRROR OF CONSCIOUSNESS

137

not only the forces which act upon us, but our behaviour under their influence, and (to use a homely comparison) the spectacle gives us such assistance as we derive from a looking-glass when dressing ourselves.

Consciousness marshals our perceptions and recollections for reasoning analysis. It converts

so to speak, a disorderly pile of literature into a well-arranged library, classifying a store of desultory information into definite knowledge, which

can be used to correct the instinctive propensity to link together, as cause and effect, events that

are not essentially connected, merely because one

has followed the other in our experience. We owe

it to knowledge, for instance, that we can deny

that the state of the atmosphere upon St. Swithin's

day determines the course of the weather during

the forty days following.

Consciousness, further, sharpens the edge of the

reasoning faculty by which we appreciate the

properties of things. We perceive that a red flower

is not an indivisible whole—to be taken as it

stands—but is a flower that possesses the property

of redness. Our grasp of this property

is styled "conception" as opposed to our

"perception" of the flower as a whole. Con-

sciousness enables reason to go further and

to apprehend that properties may have properties

of their own. Reason sees that a flight

of three birds has the property of "threeness":

assisted by consciousness it sees that
"threeness"
has the property of being *number* and
can be
classed with "fourness" and "fiveness":
so
also it can distinguish the property of
shape in
roundness and squareness. of *colour*
in redness
and blueness. Properties are, in fact,
figured as
abstract ideas and we gain such
concepts as those
of sweetness, bitterness, virtue, and
vice*. Nor